



The Old Ironsides Report

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A few lucky soldiers get practically home-cooked meals at 352nd Civil Affairs Command in Baghdad

**Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Conrad College
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BAGHDAD, Iraq – Sgt. April Denise Brown just loves to cook, so, a few months ago, when she was asked to serve as the cook for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 352nd Civil Affairs Command in Baghdad, she was happy to oblige.

The civil affairs soldiers are happy, too, because, thanks to Brown and a few other soldiers, the unit is now getting the practically home-cooked meals for dinner, six days a week.

The 352nd Civil Affairs Command is an Army Reserve unit out of Riverdale, Md.

From fried chicken to lasagna to apple cobbler, and from fresh tossed salads to fruit salads, the dinners prepared by Brown and her helpers are always a treat for the civil affairs soldiers, who certainly look forward to sitting down to a home-cooked meal at the end of a hot and dangerous day in Baghdad.

Brown said she cooks a lot back home in Glen Burnie, Md.,

"I've been cooking since I was 15," she said. "My mother was a single parent so we had to learn to cook if we wanted to eat."

Besides her full-time civilian job with the U.S. Postal Service in Odenton, Md., Brown does some catering on the side.

"I cook for weddings, receptions and change-of-command ceremonies -- anything from cakes to eight-course meals," she said. "But I am not really a cook in the Army. By military occupational specialty (MOS), I am an administrative specialist," she said.

However, during the unit's first days of deployment to Iraq, some soldiers asked Brown, "Can you please fix us something to eat?" She said she would try and she's been cooking in Baghdad ever since then, she said.

The meals are very good, according to Sgt. Maj. Dan Anderson, deputy resource manager for the 352nd. "Really the food is as good as in any restaurant," he said.

The soldiers are continually surprised at how tasty the meals are, calling them home-cooking, although some of the rations come from the U.S. frozen but partly cooked. "Is there a culinary award for someone who's not in the culinary arts?" asked Lt. Col. Mary Ann King, information



Sgt. April Brown, an Army Reserve administration clerk serves as the cook for the 352nd Civil Affairs Command, prepares apple pies for her soldiers.

coordinator for the Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center in Baghdad.

"She really takes pride in her work. She enjoys her work," King said.

Brown has great help from Staff Sgt. Giselle Tapia in the kitchen and Spc. Eric Lopez, driver. They get their food from the ration point at the Army's main Baghdad base at the Baghdad International Airport.

"All of the food, except breads and drinks, comes from the United States, and we use only bottled water for cooking," Brown said with a smile. "So we know it's safe and we make it tasty. This is the place to come for a good home-cooked dinner, thousands of miles from home."

NEWS

Photos of Saddam's Sons' Bodies Released

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The U.S. military released graphic after-death photographs Thursday in an effort to prove to Iraqis that Saddam Hussein's feared sons, Odai and Qusai, were killed in a fierce gunbattle this week. Two U.S.-military photos showed the first man, identified as Qusai with bruises and blood spots around his eyes. That face was far more intact than the other, identified as Odai, and his mouth was open with his teeth showing.



Probe Reveals Lapses Before 9/11 Attacks

WASHINGTON (AP) - Prior to the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the CIA failed to act on intelligence it had about hijackers, the FBI was unable to track al-Qaida in the United States, and key National Security Agency communications intercepts never were circulated, a congressional investigation has concluded. But even had these and many other failures not occurred, no evidence surfaced in the probe by the House and Senate intelligence committees to show that the government could have prevented the attacks that killed more than 3,000 people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania.

Oddly Enough

Bank Robber Writes Holdup Note on Resume

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) -- A bank robber made the ultimate bad career move when he wrote a holdup note - on the back of his resume. Police used the job-search information to identify the man, who was arrested and charged with robbing a Wells Fargo bank branch on Fort Worth's east side. The man had tried to hide the personal information by taping black construction paper over it. But then he forgot to retrieve the note and take it with him after giving it to the teller. Police then just peeled the tape from the note. A tip led police to a Fort Worth motel, where the man was arrested Saturday. He remained in federal custody on bank robbery charges.

SPORTS

Armstrong Maintains Overall Lead in Tour

BORDEAUX, France (AP) - Saving himself and his overall lead for the great battle to come, Lance Armstrong cruised to a place-finish Thursday in the pancake-flat 17th stage of the Tour de France, his focus on an expected race-deciding time trial Saturday. The 112-mile stage, a hill-less, anticlimactic route after the dramas that gripped the Tour in the mountains, was won by Servais Knaben, the first Dutch rider to take a stage on this centenary Tour.

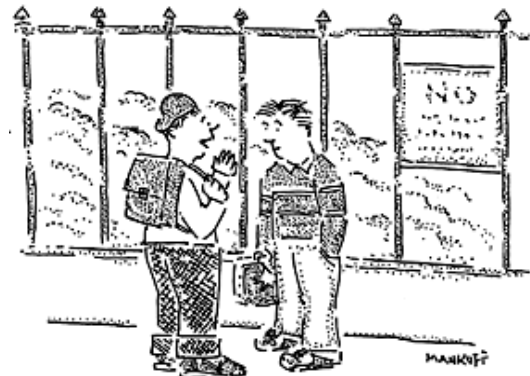
Barry Bonds Nears Another Homer Milestone

(AP) - Barry Bonds is closing in on another milestone. Bonds tied Willie McCovey's franchise record with his 469th homer for San Francisco - No. 645 of his career, and spot-starter Jim Brower pitched six scoreless innings as the Giants beat the Arizona Diamondbacks 7-1 on Wednesday night for their seventh straight win. "Willie was a big home-run hitter, but this guy, I guess, is going to pass him any swing now," said Giants manager Felipe Alou, who played five seasons with McCovey.

Entertainment

Missy Elliott Works Up 8 MTV Nominations

NEW YORK (AP) - Missy Elliott worked her way to a leading eight nominations for this year's MTV Video Music Awards. The rapper's video for "Work It," a surreal, Daliesque mixture of flies, gray skies and twisted trees, is up for video of the year, best female video and best hip-hop video, the cable music channel announced Thursday.



*"I'll trade you a Jeter and a Bonds
for a Hikmat al-Azzawi."*

This Day in History: 25 July, 1936

On July 25, 1936, the audience at the Park Theater in Bridgeport, Connecticut applauded the closing night performance of *Macbeth*, produced by John Houseman and directed by Orson Welles for the Federal Theatre Project (FTP) of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The FTP was one of five arts-related projects established during the first term of President Franklin D. Roosevelt to relieve the distress of unemployed writers, actors, and artists during the Great Depression.